

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 015325
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR./HLK

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

P - MR. HABIB

S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 015325

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST

REF: JIDDA 638

1. PLEASE CONVEY FOLLOWING ORAL MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY TO
FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

I WAS GRATIFIED TO HEAR FROM AMBASSADOR PORTER THAT
HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO MY VISITING SAUDI
ARABIA DURING MY FORTHCOMING TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST.
I ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THIS INITIAL MEETING WITH
HIS MAJESTY AND MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

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REGARDING YOUR REQUEST THAT SAUDI ARABIA BE THE LAST STOP
ON MY ITINERARY, THIS HAD ALSO BEEN MY PREFERENCE. UN-
FORTUNATELY, THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA, WHICH I HAD PROPOSED
VISITING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE SAUDI ARABIA, IS NOT ABLE TO
RECEIVE ME ON THE DATES I SUGGESTED AND HAS ASKED THAT I
VISIT DAMASCUS EITHER BEFORE FEBRUARY 18 OR AFTER

FEBRUARY 20. MY SCHEDULE BEFORE FEBRUARY 18, INVOLVING VISITS TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT, IS ALREADY FIRMLY FIXED, AND I AM UNABLE TO EXTEND MY TRIP SINCE I MUST BE BACK IN WASHINGTON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 21. IT WAS ONLY FOR THIS REASON THAT I ASKED AMBASSADOR PORTER TO INQUIRE WHETHER IT WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR ME TO ARRIVE IN SAUDI ARABIA ON FEBRUARY 19, SO THAT I COULD ACCOMMODATE PRESIDENT ASAD'S REQUEST AND VISIT SYRIA THE AFTERNOON OF FEBRUARY 20 AND THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 21 ON MY WAY BACK TO WASHINGTON. I WILL HAVE VISITED ALL THE OTHER COUNTRIES ON MY ITINERARY BEFORE ARRIVING IN SAUDI ARABIA AND WILL OF COURSE COMMUNICATE TO YOUR HIGHNESS ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR IMPRESSIONS RESULTING FROM MY STOP IN DAMASCUS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SINCE THE SCHEDULES OF THE LEADERS AMONG THE CONFRONTATION STATES AND MY OWN COMMITMENTS IN WASHINGTON DO NOT PERMIT ME THE FLEXIBILITY TO VISIT SAUDI ARABIA LAST AS I HAD INITIALLY INTENDED, I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS MAJESTY KING KHALID WOULD NOT OBJECT TO MY VISITING RIYADH ON MY NEXT TO LAST STOP.

I VERY MUCH LOOK FORWARD TO RENEWING OUR ACQUAINTANCE NEXT MONTH. END TEXT.
VANCE

SECRET

NNN

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